

West University Senior Service Board Minutes

October 13, 2016

Roll Call: Toby Brooks initially presided and called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m.

Present: Selby Clark (Chair Elect), George Baker, Sarah Ballanfant, Ruth Becker (Secretary Elect), Candyce Beneke (Secretary), Anne Crowley (voted in), Susan Davis, Rebecca Dozier, Judy Faulkner, John Palmer. **Absent:** Becky Arnold, Carlos De La Torre, Virginia Lootens, Stan McCandless and Carlos De La Torre **Staff:** Toby Brooks, Tim O'Connor. **Council Liason:** Burt Ballanfant. **Visitor:** Alida Drewes A quorum was present.

Minutes: Rebecca Dozier moved to approve the Minutes of June 9, 2016, as presented. John Palmer seconded. The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

Announcements/New Chairman Vote (Toby Brooks): Toby reported that Michelle Moore resigned as Chair and as a Board Member for medical reasons. She noted that Selby Clark wanted to submit his name to replace Michelle as Chair. Burt Ballanfant stated that the Board would need City Council approval for the election or appointment of any new officers or board members. Candyce Beneke moved to elect Selby Clark as the new Chair. Judy Faulkner seconded. Toby called for a vote and the motion carried unanimously, subject to approval by City Council. Congratulations Selby! Tim O'Connor noted that the terms of all Boards are the same as elections, so Board members are sworn in for two years. All names will be up for re-election or re-appointment in August 2017.

New Vice-Chair/Secretary Vote (Toby Brooks): Toby noted that we should also consider electing a Vice-Chair of the Senior Board because there used to be one in past years. John Palmer suggested that Candyce Beneke serve as Vice-Chair; Toby Brooks noted that Ruth Becker also expressed an interest in serving. After some discussion, Judy Faulkner moved to elect Candyce Beneke as Vice-Chair and Ruth Becker as Secretary. John Palmer seconded. The motion carried unanimously, subject to formal approval by City Council. Congratulations Candyce and Ruth!

Activities and Previews (Toby Brooks):

1. The Great Decisions Group has had some great speakers, including topics on Islam, Elections, N. Korea, Foreign Policy Associations, etc. Toby noted that there is a book with 8 topics and a new session will be starting next year. Other activities include the Brazos Towers Tour and Lunch, the Pearl Fincher Museum, and the Alvin Bayou Wildlife Center. The Festival of Arts is next week and the Drug Take Back Event is October 22. John Palmer will look into how folks can dispose of drugs all year (i.e. if someone passes away and has lots of drugs). Doctors Without Borders also collects drugs.
2. Medical Alert Task Force – Carlos De La Torre will report on this at next month's meeting.
3. The annual Volunteer Lunch will be held on Tuesday, Nov. 15, 2016.

APAC Report (Virginia Lootens): Absent; no report.

Council Meeting Report (Burt Ballanfant): (Burt had to leave early so he gave his report after approval of the minutes.) Burt announced that Tim O'Conner is retiring from the City of West University in early 2017. Burt noted that it is a sad occasion, but that we all wish him well, and Burt invited Tim back to visit and help out any time! He also congratulated Tim as a significant contributor and visionary in West U Parks and Recreation management (in this business for over 40 years)! Tim responded by praising and thanking his great team (Susan White, Toby Brooks, Brittany Bakes, and others), and noted that there has been little to no attrition due to the support he has received from Council and the WU Citizen Boards. He announced that the City Manager plans to appoint Susan White as the new Director of Parks and Rec, and to name Tim as Director Emeritus!

At the recent Council meeting, Burt reported that two additional police officers and one new dispatcher were proposed. The 2017 budget, set to be voted on in two weeks (Oct 24), will include funds for those proposed new hires. This proposal has tremendous citizen support due to the recent increase in crime.

Good Neighbor Team (Dorothy Zink/Mary Lee Gray): Toby Brooks reporting. Toby reported that the Good Neighbor team sent out fall cards in September to 133 seniors on our GNT roster. At the next meeting in October, representatives from Sheltering Arms and the Alzheimer's Association will be presenting on Tips and Tricks for Seniors. Poinsettias have been ordered and will be delivered by our volunteers to their seniors in early December.

Parks and Recreation Report (Tim O'Connor): Tim referred the Board to the most recent weekly Parks and Rec Weekly Operations Report. He highlighted news about the Jennie Elizabeth Hughes Park, new tennis court lighting and policy/procedure review, his succession plan, and the approval of his requested budget for 2017. Tim noted that the 50% subsidy for seniors aged 65-74 and a full subsidy for seniors 75+ is still in place. [NOTE/QUESTION: If seniors 65-74 ask for a waiver, can they still receive a full subsidy?]. He noted that the West End redevelopment of Colonial Park went well over the summer, and is planning to re-launch via publicity (Facebook, Twitter, E-blast, signage) to remind the public that that portion of the park is open all year even though the pool is now closed for the winter season. At this time, no reservation system for use of this area exists, at least through January of 2018. Usage is on first-come, first-serve basis. Tim recommends that it will stay that way, noting that we do not rent out other parks except for the east end of Colonial Park Pavilion and Colonial Park pool itself. Colonial West End has grills and coal boxes for used coals. He is exploring having a cookout later in the year to honor West U first responders and Citizen Boards.

Previous Business:

- A.** Medical Alert Task Force – Carlos De La Torre is exploring and will report next meeting.
- B.** Jenni Hughes Park Update – Selby Clark. Selby reported on the last meeting of the park's Planning Board, attended by 15-20 people. Most meeting attendees live near the house, are on the Friends or Parks Boards, are city personnel, etc. and all offered ideas of what should be included in a "quiet park." He noted that the home will probably be removed because there are too many requirements of the "gift." A co-executor of the estate gave a presentation on his interpretation of the word "quiet" – kids or not, equipment or not, etc. The trustee wrote a follow-up letter to the Planning Board saying that the Board's ideas of quiet were not his ideas (i.e. he would say no picnic table because it would encourage people to gather there!). John Palmer mentioned something like a Catholic park – a contemplative place. Selby said they were looking at adding a 4-way stop and dropping the speed to 20 mph (corner of Pittsburg and Sewanee). A landscape architectural firm has been retained to design the park and will provide photos at their next meeting. Selby suggested a water feature, even if it increases maintenance costs. There is a six month planning window and the next meeting is November 25.
- C.** 9-1-1 registration follow up - ?
- D.** Next Door App discussion – Michelle Moore was exploring this. Will check with her by next meeting.
- E.** Senior Exemption Follow-up ?

New Business: Appointment of New Board Member. Toby noted that Ann Crowley is applying for an open board member position. Ann left the room and Selby Clark moved to approve Ann as a member of our Board. John Palmer seconded. The motion carried unanimously, subject to City Council approval. Congratulations Ann!

Citizen Comments: Alida Drewes made several comments/suggestions for the Board: no one on Board mentioned waiver for dues for WU Recreation Center for seniors 64-75; need to focus more on senior exemptions, need closed caption on movies for hearing impaired, should review discounted fees for seniors, survey seniors for their current needs/preferences, use money in the city budget for seniors, give seniors soft blankets, put quilt in plexiglass, and make coffee available every day to all seniors. She also handed out a folder full of direct mailings on Senior Alert systems to pass around.

Adjournment: Selby Clark moved to adjourn. John Palmer seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 3:26 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Candyce Beneke,
Board Secretary